

This case study will tell the story of Katie Davis, an author, and entrepreneur, as she navigates the online world in 2021. Through her journey, you will learn the tips and tricks she uses for her own small business which will help other small business owners striving to succeed online using A2's Turbo Max hosting plan.

## Katie Davis, Author

# For the Love of Writing



### Website speed and security are essential in 2021, so finding the right hosting provider and plan is an important task for many small business owners

[Katie Davis](#) is an accomplished author, with over a dozen traditionally published books for children, launched two guides for writers at #1 on Amazon, a TEDx and conference speaker, writing coach, and A2 Hosting Customer. She's the co-founder of the [Picture Book Summit](#), and most recently the founder of The Writers' Block, a virtual community that helps both experienced and new writers fine-tune their craft through live critiques. She's known she wanted to be an entrepreneur since the beginning of her career.

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“I’ve always wanted to be my own boss,” Katie says. “I didn’t do well working for other people. In my 20s I started my company, Dirty Dishes making hand-painted ceramics. As long as I could pay the bills, I was happy.” She started her career in advertising and marketing, later pivoting to selling hand-painted ceramics, and then moved into writing and illustrating children’s books and novels. She’s sold almost a million copies of her books by this point. Though she has many talents, her secret superpower, and where her passions currently lie, is teaching writers about writing, and coaching them past any procrastinating talents they may have.

## **Building Katie’s Digital Presence with A2 Hosting**

Katie founded her site back in 1999 and she’s been using it to connect with her readers and other writers ever since. When asked, Katie shared, “My website is my home online.” At the beginning of her career, she was in charge of handling the front and back end of her website, but as she progressed she realized that extra help could benefit her business. She hired [WPOnline Design](#) to take charge of her site. She had been experiencing a lot of malware and DDoS attacks which were crippling her webpage. Most attacks had been targeted at her previous host so her web developer told her to make a change. Though he also offered hosting through his own company, he recommended A2 Hosting because of its good prices, stability, reliability, and faster load times. We’ve now been working in tandem to ensure Katie the best site. “WP Online Design has had a great experience working with A2’s team on multiple occasions to keep Katie’s site running as smoothly as possible,” they commented.

When selecting her hosting provider, Katie chose A2 Hosting because she said she “wanted to make sure that my site was strong enough to handle growth and able to take the weight of what I put on there.” She’s since stayed with A2 because she “values transparency and honesty in a company” and she continues to see that here. She appreciates her interactions with A2 chat and phone support. Katie said, “I’m techy, but when it comes to hosting issues – forget about

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it! It can be frustrating so I appreciate A2’s support staff.” She had a situation recently where her SSL certificate had issues due to misconnections with a payment system, and when she called support the issue was resolved in minutes. It’s interactions like these that have kept her with A2 Hosting for the past decade.

## **The Writers’ Block**

Katie’s latest venture is [The Writers’ Block](#), a virtual support community for writers. The Writers’ Block is a place for writers to take their craft to the next level through twice-monthly live critiques (only by her, not the other members) and monthly “Writers Playground” sessions, where she shares tips, give encouragement, and answers questions. Through this community, Katie is able to help fellow writers grow as she reads and annotates

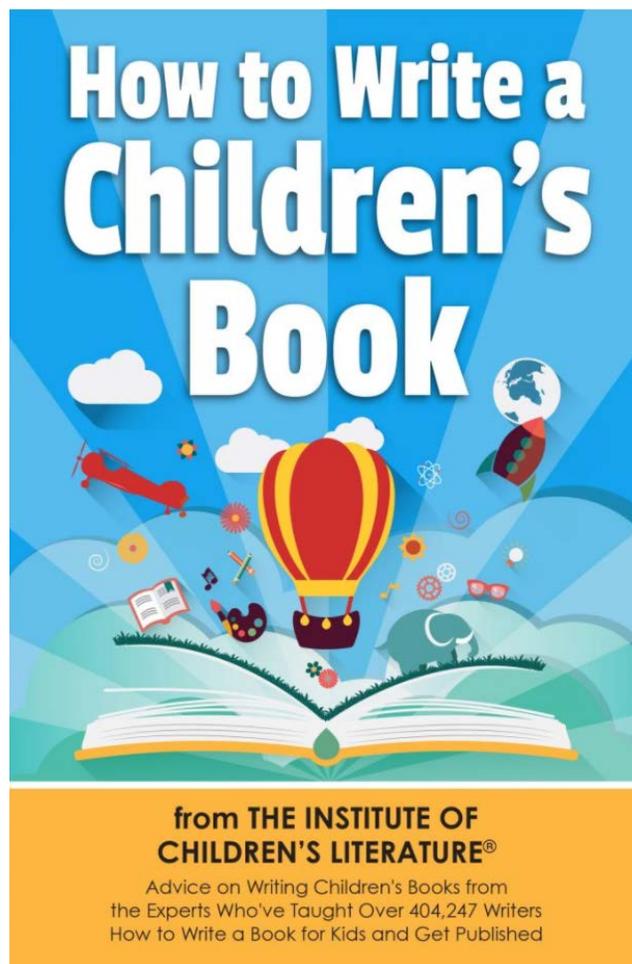
their manuscripts. Katie describes it as “a virtual community—a private clubhouse—offering you writing inspiration and support, publishing instruction, experts’ knowledge, marketing skills, and more. It’s a place to get encouragement to keep you going when the going hits a dead stop; it’s a welcoming front porch when you just can’t seem to continue or even get yourself started.” She runs the community through her website, holding bi-monthly workshops, guest expert interviews, and live community sessions. “My business is helping writers develop their skills. My bread and butter is teaching people what they need to know about their work and the business.” To accomplish this every day she relies on optimal performance from her site.

## Configuring Her WordPress

Katie chose to migrate to a Turbo Max Shared Hosting plan when moving her WordPress site to A2. For Katie, a faster site is not a “nice to have” portion of her business, it was essential. With faster loading times she gets better SEO rankings, lower bounce rates, and higher visitor satisfaction. Turbo provides her site with up to 20x faster performance. A2’s Turbo Max servers are made faster through a combination of NVMe drives, AMD EPYC Processors, LiteSpeed Servers, and built-in caching with Memcached, turbo caching, and APC/OpCache. All of these in tandem help her site load faster for her writers each day.

As a WordPress user, Katie also has access to the A2 Optimized WordPress plugin that pre-configured her setup to optimize performance and security settings. This includes WordPress login page protection, Easy W3 Total Cache configuration, Minify HTML, CCS, and JS. It also helps with image optimization which is important due to some of the larger images of her books that she houses on

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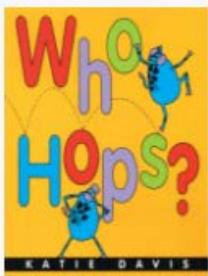
her site.

In the last couple of years, Katie has begun to improve her website as she focuses more on her online business, The Writers’ Block. She’s been working on improving site appearance and adding more content. When asked what online tools and plug-ins have been most valuable, she had a few to share with fellow WordPress users. She relies on WooCommerce, Stripe, and LeadPages for her daily use. “Stripe is super easy. It lets me manage and handle all financial transactions, whether just payments or if I need to refund a member. I haven’t had a billing dispute, but everything with Stripe has been easy,” she says. “Simplifying the experience is key for small businesses. I had too many different services and it was too complex and I’ve been working to make it simpler.”

In addition to her efforts, A2 Hosting’s Turbo Shared

Plans also help with the backend function of her site. Performance Plus, offering traffic spike protection, applies additional resources so that Katie's site retains performance even during traffic surges. This is a great service if Katie publishes a popular blog post or offers a new book to her audience. A2's free SSL certificate provides free HTTPS encryption and contributes to the security of [katedavis.com](https://katedavis.com). Finally, A2's DropSuite Backups offer offsite backups and are recommended for Katie's peace of mind that may come from disasters or hardware

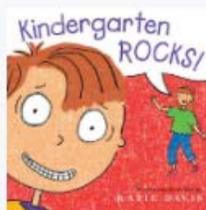
## Some of Katie's Work



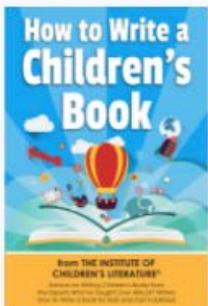
**Who Hops?**



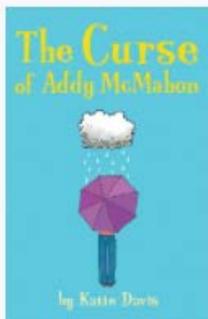
**Little Chicken's Big Day**



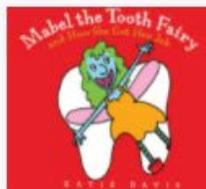
**Kindergarten Rocks!**



**How to Write a Children's Book**



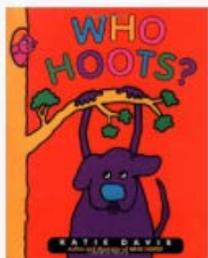
**The Curse of Addy McMahon**



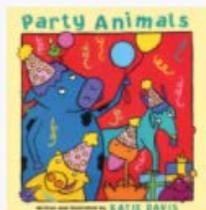
**Mabel the Tooth Fairy and How She Got Her Job**



**I Hate To Go To Bed!**



**Who Hoots?**



**Party Animals**

## Katie's Advice to Other Small Businesses

Katie shared advice from her experience as a small business owner of twenty years in order to shed some light on how others can succeed long term: "When you're a small business owner, it's easy to work harder than when working for someone else. If you're your own boss, you still have to tell that boss--aka YOU--when you need a day off. A silver lining of the lockdown for me was learning to de-stress about work," Katie said. "I don't have to work every minute of the day." When asked about starting out she had some great advice for writers trying to make it in 2021. "Figure out who your audience is and build a mailing list. Even if you're not yet published, it will enable you to keep in touch with your fans. It keeps your fan base connected. And if you're thinking, 'Yeah, but I do that on Facebook/IG/Twitter/Whatever, remember that's just building your house on someone else's land. Own the land.'"

She also recommends taking the time to choose the right hosting provider for your needs. For Katie, A2 Hosting has been the right choice for the last ten years and counting. Between Katie, her web designer, and A2 Hosting, her small business has continued to thrive through 2021.

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